

Submission

End of Life Choice Bill

NZ Council for Civil Liberties

<http://nzcl.org.nz>

12<sup>th</sup> February 2018

## **About the submitter**

The New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties is a watchdog for rights and freedoms in New Zealand. Formed in 1952, the Council works through education and advocacy to promote a rights-based society and prevent the erosion of civil liberties by government or any other parties. It is a voluntary not-for-profit organisation.

## **Contact Details**

Enquiries can be directed to the NZ Council for Civil Liberties' spokesperson, Thomas Beagle, on 021-805040 or at [thomas@nzcl.org.nz](mailto:thomas@nzcl.org.nz).

## **About this Submission**

The Council do not wish to appear before the Select Committee.

## Submission

The New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties encourages Parliament to pass the End of Life Choice Bill.

The Council supports the principle that people should be free to decide their own personal destiny without imposing their beliefs on others. The Council supports in general the right of competent, seriously ill and suffering adults to choose physician-assisted death. The Council considers it is important that other views are respected: people who do not agree with euthanasia should be under no compulsion.

The Council supports the End of Life Choice Bill because it is in alignment with international human rights and civil liberties in New Zealand.

The Council also notes support for similar policies in other countries. Similar laws have been in place in Switzerland for 75 years<sup>1</sup>, and have been enacted in five other countries in the past 15 years: Canada<sup>2</sup>, Colombia<sup>3</sup>, Belgium<sup>4</sup>, the Netherlands<sup>5</sup>, and Luxembourg<sup>6</sup>. Similar laws have also been enacted in the Australian state of Victoria<sup>7</sup>, six US states<sup>8 9 10 11 12 13</sup>, and Washington D.C.<sup>14</sup>. Broad support also exists from international civil liberties organizations, notably the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Civil Liberties Australia.

The Council has reviewed the End of Life Choice Bill and finds the wording strikes an acceptable balance between necessary controls and civil liberties.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19370083/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://openparliament.ca/bills/42-1/C-14/>

<sup>3</sup> Colombia, Senate of Colombia, Proyecto de ley de Senado por la cual se reglamentan las prácticas de la Eutanasia y la asistencia al suicidio en Colombia y se dictan otras disposiciones, (Senate bill tabled 30 July 2015).

<sup>4</sup>

<http://www.health.belgium.be/internet2Prd/groups/public/@public/@dg1/@acutecare/documents/ie2law/14888537.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>

[http://www.euthanasiecommissie.nl/Images/Wet%20toetsing%20levensbeeindiging%20op%20verzoek%20en%20hulp%20bij%20zelfdoding%20Engels\\_tcm52-36287.pdf](http://www.euthanasiecommissie.nl/Images/Wet%20toetsing%20levensbeeindiging%20op%20verzoek%20en%20hulp%20bij%20zelfdoding%20Engels_tcm52-36287.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2009/0046/a046.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/research-papers/download/36-research-papers/13834-voluntary-assisted-dying-bill-2017>

<sup>8</sup>

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Pages/ors.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/Acts/ACT039.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520162AB15](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billStatusClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520162AB15)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/medical-aid-dying>

<sup>13</sup> <https://law.justia.com/cases/montana/supreme-court/2009/50c59956-3100-468d-b397-4ab38f6eda4d.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://doh.dc.gov/page/death-dignity-act-2016>